

Magazine Feature Section

The Strange Romance of the Red-Headed Nurse

Here's a romantic story, mates, about a Chicago girl, red hair and a warrior bold. Of course, they're married now and are honeymooning in far-off Norway.

But when the yarn is spun of how she transformed the color of her hair from a rich black to a Titian red by dipping it into a queer lake in South America, and of how he, in a Quest of the Golden Girl, found her in Europe—well, then, shiver our timbers! We'll confess it's an astounding and a mighty pretty yarn. Moreover, like all stories that are true, this one is stranger than fiction.

There are two people, however, who are willing and eager to tell how true it all is. One is Corporal David Wallace, formerly of King Edward's Horse—hero of the battle of Neuve Chapelle, who was shot in the leg there and disabled from further service, and who afterward married Miss Rosalind Cameron, formerly of Chicago.

In his early years Wallace, a young Englishman whose parents are well to do, had dreamed, as adolescent youths are wont to do, that he would marry only a girl with golden hair. So he waited and waited. The war came on. He marched to the front, was shot and sent to a hospital near Paris. There he met Miss Cameron, who had gone to Europe with the intention of becoming a trained nurse.

ADVENTURER LOSES HEART.

The rest of the story can be told in four words—"Love, Marriage, Honeymoon, Happiness." As before stated, it's a strange yarn, so let's begin at the beginning:

Twenty-four years ago Rosalind Cameron was born in the good old village of Mayfair, Ill. When she was three years old the family moved into Chicago. Rosalind grew into a pretty, dark-haired, brown-eyed lass. One day when, at the age of nine, she returned from school her mother cried:

years swept by without even a word from him telling of his whereabouts. The girl grew to be a young woman. Then suddenly fate left her alone in the world. Her parents were drowned during a vacation trip on Lake Superior and the pretty orphan girl found herself cast on the world with a small bit of insurance money.

One evening when she returned to her lodgings she found a mysterious-looking letter bearing a Brazilian stamp which had been forwarded to Chicago and various addresses before it found her. The letter was written in Spanish, and Miss Cameron had to search for an interpreter.

It was a communication from lawyers in Rio Janeiro, Brazil, informing her that she was sole heir to the estate of John Aspinwall, who some months previously had died near Olivenca, Brazil. The letter stated that Aspinwall had de-

est discovery was a small lake on her late uncle's estate, a lake whose waters, she learned, turns the hair of human beings a rich, deep red.

It was quite by accident that Miss Cameron discovered the wonderful secret of the lake, which is among some hills near one of the mines. She had been amazed by the number of red-haired natives of a particular tribe. Although all the other natives roundabout had raven locks, the women of this particular tribe, the Ucayali, who claim direct descent from the ancient Incas, who once ruled over Peru, had brilliant red hair.

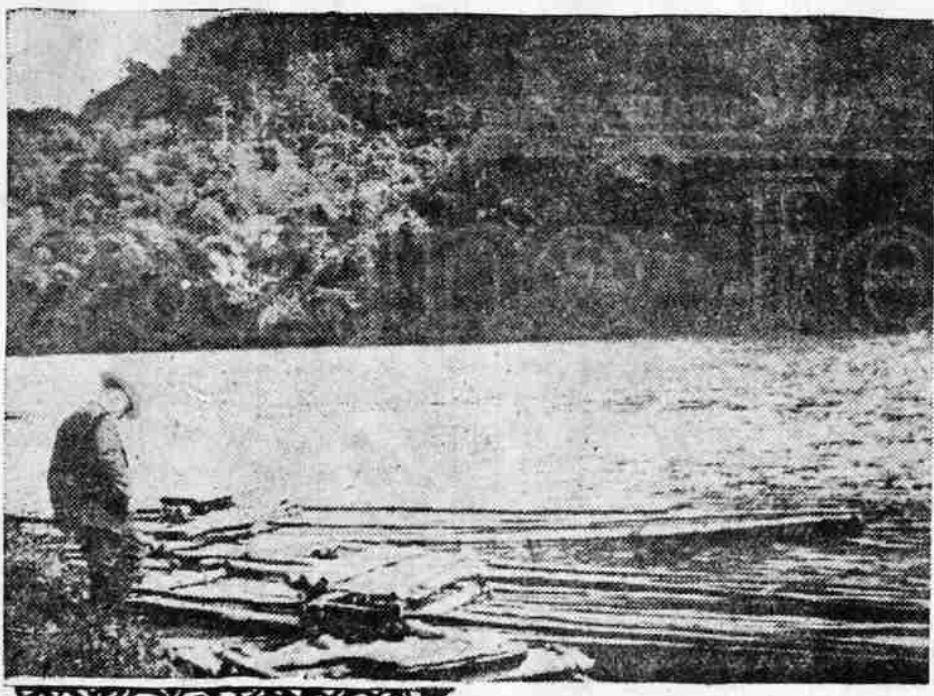
THE UCAYALIS' SECRET.

Miss Cameron also noted that the small girls of the tribe had black locks like the other natives, but that when the girls reached the age of about 16 their hair suddenly became as red as the setting sun. She inquired of the Ucayali women how they obtained their flaming locks, but was met by a mysterious silence. Coddle them and bribe them as she might, Miss Cameron could not learn the secret. One old crone finally, under the bribe of a few yards of calico, told the emerald queen that the red hair was a tribal secret that had been handed down for several generations.

The emerald queen, as the young woman is called in the upper reaches of the Amazon, was determined to learn the tribal secret. Incidentally, she was anxious to possess red hair. Late one night, when the human world was sound asleep and only the jungle beasts and reptiles were about, Miss Cameron awoke. Sleep had gone from her, and try as she might she could not compose herself. Finally she arose and dressed.

Taking down her rifle, the doughty young woman decided to take a walk.

"I went up the trail that led from the house toward my uncle's grave,"



View of Famous Titian Hair Lake.

she said on her return from Brazil. "The grave lay on a hilltop near the lake. It was a wonderful night, the trail was illuminated as if it were early dawn, for the southern stars that seem to hang so low in those latitudes burned like great lanterns in the sky.

"At last I reached the little inclosure in which is the grave of my uncle. I stood fascinated by the scene, gazing about me for several minutes. Soon down near the far bank of the lake I saw people moving about. I thought it strange that the natives were up and about at such a weird hour and decided to investigate.

"I crept down the hillside and began skirting around the end of the lake through the thick tropical foliage. At last I came to a point where I could overlook the strange scene being enacted. Native medicine men with weird masks stood about a group of young girls. Back of the group were gathered a score of the older women of the tribe. The priests or medicine men were murmuring a low chant, which was taken up by the older women. Suddenly the priests seized one of the girls and led her to the edge of the lake. Then they forced her to her knees and shoved her head into the water. Time and again her head was submerged.

"The girl, with her head dripping, was then placed to one side, after which another and another of the girls was submitted to the same ordeal. The night was well along before the ceremony was concluded with a chant, after which the natives disappeared into the jungle. I retraced my steps to the house, wondering what it was all about.

DIPS HAIR IN MAGIC LAKE.

"Try as I might, I could not sleep. I could not get the strange native ceremony out of my mind. What



Mrs. David Wallace, Who Inherited Fortune and Lake Which Turned Hair Red and Won Her Soldier Husband.

was it all about? I kept asking myself. Suddenly toward morning like a flash the meaning of the ceremony broke upon my startled mind. I had discovered the secret of the red hair. Through some miraculous composition of the waters of the little lake's hair could be turned red.

"Columbus discovering America, the lonely miner stumbling upon an El Dorado was not more pleased than I was at my great find. I can assure you that I lost no time in making use of my discovery. The next day I visited the spot where the queer Ucayali ceremony had been enacted. Time after time I dipped my head into the waters and then sat in the sunlight with the dripping water of marvels falling from my head. I might say right here that although fond of swimming, I had never ventured into the waters of the lake. In the first place, its depth is unknown, and, second, it was a 'lake of terror,' shunned by the natives in general as a place of evil spirits. Water snakes whose bite means death.

"An old Ucayali woman in my household employ saw the change in

the color of my hair. She was frightened and asked me what I had done. I told her what I had discovered. A few days later I was visited by one of the tribal chiefs. He told me that I had discovered a tribal secret that had been preserved for many generations. He also told me that I must not disclose the secret to the other natives or strange things might happen to me. I can assure you that I was impressed by the old man's words and I have not indicated in the slightest how I obtained my red hair.

FIGHTS WAY TO CIVILIZATION.

That she might get back to civilization Miss Cameron had to take a remarkable trip. From her mines near Olivenca the young woman had to fight her way through jungle trails to Iquitos, Peru. And here at Iquitos, which is 2,500 miles from the mouth of the Amazon, the young woman had to go by steamer. Iquitos is only 500 miles from the Pacific ocean as the crow flies, but to cross Peru to the coast is an undertaking that would daunt all but the

most daring. So she boarded a little Booth Line steamer, that after almost three weeks' journey down the world's greatest river bore her into the Atlantic. She continued on the vessel to Barbados. In Barbados she got a small steamer that carried her to Colon. Here she boarded a United Fruit Company steamer, which after six days landed her in New York.

And now for the romance. With sufficient money to gratify her most extravagant whim, with no one dependent on her, the young woman decided to become an army nurse. She consulted Robert Bacon, formerly American ambassador to France, who with Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney is interested in the American Hospital in France.

WINS SOLDIER HUSBAND.

Mr. Bacon arranged matters so that, after a short course of study in New York, she went abroad and served in the American hospital at Paris, the head of which is Dr. Joseph A. Blake. Into that hospital last June Corporal Wallace was

brought. Nurse Cameron attended him.

"I say," remarked the corporal during his period of convalescence "You have wonderful hair, you know. Really, it's extraordinary how nature could bestow such beauty on a young woman with your fair complexion and brown eyes."

Thereupon Miss Cameron told him the story of the Brazilian lake.

"Then you are a real 'Lady of the Lake,'" exclaimed the corporal. "I say, but it seems unusually strange to me when I think that as a child I always thought I should fall in love only with a girl with red hair. I could not care for any other sort. Those with red hair whom I saw I like—but, you know! I sort of felt as if a white horse were around. But with you it's different—there are just you and myself. Shall it always be that way?"

Of course, she accepted him. And the corporal received a discharge from King Edward's Horse because of "disability"—who could ever fight while on a honeymoon?—and then they went to the land of the red-faced midnight sun.



Group of Natives Oddly Decorated by Mineral Colors.

"Rosie, a man is here who wants to see you. He's your uncle, John Aspinwall. Now put on a clean frock and come into the parlor."

Rosalie did. There she met John Aspinwall, gray haired, severe looking, who for a score of years had been leading an adventurous life in the wilds of South America.

A crusty old bachelor, the uncle became greatly attached to the vivacious child. For days he visited at the Cameron home. During the latter part of his stay he spoke of mysterious old mines he was working in the Brazilian wilds and gave Rosie a wonderful emerald which he said had been taken from one of them.

"Some day, Rosalind," he said to her, "you shall see those mines and have all the emeralds you want."

BRAVELY FACES WORLD.

It seemed an idle promise, for John Aspinwall left Chicago and the

creed that his niece must go to his estate near Olivenca and actually take possession of them. There he was buried. A pathetic little codicil in the will asked that she herself look after his grave. Thus it is with soldiers of fortune. They have the hearts of gold and souls of steel, which melt only at a smile from a child or a pretty woman.

And thus it was Miss Cameron found herself wealthy, but she had to go to Brazil to claim that wealth. Would she go alone? Well, rather! What girl who braves a subway rush or an elevated jam twice a day is afraid of a savage land?

With the proper legal documents she went to Brazil and thence to the upper Amazon country, a place little visited by white women. She found many strange things in that place of shudders, where death ever stalks and life is one of the cheapest of commodities. But the strang-